

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that the Examiner has indicated that claims 3-13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, and 4-13 remain pending in the application. Claims 2 and 3 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof.

Reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the pending application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Morassi, WO 01/41617. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In response, claim 1 has been amended to further include all the limitations of claims 2 and 3.

Applicants' incorporations of the limitations of claim 2 and 3 into claim 1 are made without any acquiescence in the propriety of the rejections made by the Examiner. Rather these amendments are made only to expedite allowance of the present application. Minor clarifying amendments have also been made to claims 1, 8, 10 and 11.

Claim 1 is now in condition for allowance in view of the above-noted remarks. Claims 4-13 are submitted to be in condition for allowance in view of their dependence from a shown to be allowable base claim and also based upon the recitation of other features of the present invention.

It is respectfully requested, therefore, that the rejections of claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) be withdrawn and that an early indication of the allowance thereof be given.

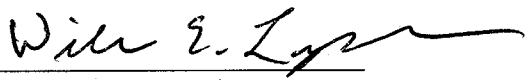
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Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based on prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to be attached thereto.

Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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